given pensions under National Old Age Pension Scheme. The beneficiaries in the State are provided old age pension through Banks quarterly.

Unfit drinking water in tubewells in West Bengal

1492. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether tube well water in a number of districts in West Bengal is unfit for drinking purposes;

(b) whether any efforts have been made to secure foreign expert cooperation to make the water free from arsenic and safe for human consumption; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) It has been reported by the Govt. of West Bengal that as per survey made upto June, 1999, some areas of eight districts have been found to be having Arsenic contamination in ground water. Some tubewells in these areas are observed to be yielding water with Arsenic exceeding the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 0.05 mg./ltr. Elimination plants developed by some foreign agencies are also being tried to ascertain the efficacy of the units. An International Workshop on Arsenic Contamination was organised at Calcutta in January, 2000 to exchange and share the views on Arsenic contamination in ground water.